

Communication Programme for Espoo Parishes

Espoo Parishes' communication – what is it?

Communication is interaction, being present, conveying messages and listening. Communication occurs face-to-face or through a medium – but always from human to human and between people.

The purpose of the Espoo Parishes' communication programme is to guide and support

- parish staff and communication professionals
- parishioners, volunteers, and elected officials in their respective communication roles.



1. Tasks, operating principles and objectives

The Espoo Parishes implement their strategy in their communication.

Our mission as communicators is

- to convey faith, hope and love
- to increase the visibility of parish life and activities – to raise awareness and extend an invitation to join

Communication professionals are also particularly responsible for

- meeting the information needs of parishioners and local residents
- supporting the parishes' internal communication
- inspiring and supporting others in their communication

Communication is guided by the following operating principles.

Our communication is bold and compelling. It

- is based on the church's core message and is boldly Christian
- is topical and open
- is respectful, encourages dialogue and acts as a counterforce to polarisation
- is recognisable, clear and accessible
- is experiential and insightful
- recognises the needs of various target groups
- evolves as communication channels and technologies develop.

The **strategic goal of communication** is to both increase visibility and raise awareness of parish activities and the church's message among parishioners and Espoo residents in a meaningful way.

2. Communication roles and responsibilities

Every encounter is communication.

The voice of the church is born from the voices of all parishioners, elected officials and church staff. Each can play their part as the church's voice in society and their immediate surroundings.

The smooth running of parish work is ensured through good workplace communication, where everyone has their own responsibility.

Parishioners, volunteers and elected officials

- Each parishioner communicates in their own life from their own perspective. Parishioners must have the opportunity to carry out communication responsibilities and tasks in their parish.
- Volunteers often handle agreed-upon communication tasks related to their voluntary duties. These roles are agreed upon on a case-by-case basis.
- Elected officials have a bird's-eye view of parish activities and decision making. They each act as the voice of the church and the parishes in their own networks.

Each staff member

- assumes a communication role in their work and has a communication responsibility tied to their own work.
- knows their own work inside out and is able to highlight their own expertise within the workplace, in networks and in public. Communication professionals are on hand to provide support.
- follows workplace-related news in internal channels and communicates about key work-related issues.

The supervisor / management

- ensures that (in-house) staff are aware of important issues
- is responsible for ensuring that staff have sufficient capabilities to succeed in their communication tasks
- communicates openly and actively
- is particularly responsible for the parishes' social visibility
- is responsible for communication in emergency and crisis situations.

Communication professionals

- are responsible for planning and implementing communication to the agreed extent
- support parish staff in their communication
- organise communication training
- are responsible for communication frameworks such as parish magazines, websites and visual design
- are responsible for communicating with and monitoring media as well as maintaining media relations
- are responsible for communicating in cooperation with other actors

The **Communication Committee** steers the communication of the Espoo Parishes in accordance with its rules of procedure. The Kirkko ja kaupunki magazine has its own editorial staff. They report to the Joint Media Board.

3. Community communication policies

Communication is a series of choices: What, for whom, how, where, when, who and with whom. The direction of the Espoo Parishes is defined in the strategy. The choices made in community communication support the direction taken.

In particular, the community communication policies guide and support parish decision-makers, employees and communication professionals.

Communication content Strategically justified topics are emphasised in communication content.

Key target groups. As stated in the strategy, we ensure that we communicate in particular

- with children, young people and young adults
- with those who have no established relationship with the parish

and also take into account other-language target groups.

Languages used in communication The goal of the Espoo parishes is to be a hospitable and inviting community for people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This means that

- we use clear Finnish and Swedish in our communication
- we also regularly communicate in English
- we use other languages where necessary. We are looking for new multi-lingual communication solutions.
- our visual imagery also reflects Espoo's reality.

Visual design and tone of communication As per the strategy, we will sharpen the brand of the Espoo Parishes to make it easier for parishioners to approach their parish in different life situations. We will implement this by

- harmonising our brand book with the church's shared visual design and tone and updating our materials accordingly
- training staff and volunteers in the use of new brand tools
- working on the *Näin toimimme (How we work)* guide, which will be a part of the Espoo Parishes' brand book
- developing the brand book into an instructional tool to support everyone's communication.

Key channels and methods. The target groups and the goal of members commitment outlined in the strategy also define the key channels and methods chosen. Accordingly,

- we will invest in channels with a wide reach
 - we will send the Kirkko ja kaupunki magazine to Finnish-speaking member households and support the Kirkko ja kaupunki media's digital development.
 - we will send the Kyrkpressen magazine to Swedish-speaking member households
 - we will produce Jouluradio, which is a key channel for reaching young people and those farther away from the church.
 - we will communicate actively with the media
- we will target our message as accurately as possible

- we will look for and try out new ways to reach young generations and different language groups
- we will utilise commercial digital platforms in marketing
- we will collaborate with influencers
- we will use direct marketing
- we will increase engagement on social media
 - we will boldly try out new platforms and new practices
- we will seek out and create opportunities for starting conversations
 - we will spur on our key actors in the social debate about values
- we will maintain our own website in excellent condition

Communication planning and evaluation Good background processes support success, which is why

- we will improve parish visibility through joint planning and action. Together, we will prioritise the topics and events whose visibility will be made a focus.
- we will use service design methods in communication planning. In larger projects, we will assess the effectiveness of communication in more detail.
- We will set clear, measurable goals for larger projects and evaluate their success. We will use data to improve operations.

Cooperation in communication The Espoo Parishes work closely with parishes in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and with Church Communications. They also actively seek out new partnerships. This means that

- we are committed to the joint media delivery in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area
- we support the operations of the Church Media Foundation.
- we develop communication and media for children and young people together with other actors.
- we will try out the Nuorten toimitus (Young Editors) activities
- we strive to carry out communication projects in cooperation with other actors.

4. Strategic indicators for communication

Indicators have been outlined in the strategy for both strategic goals and operating principles. In accordance with them – and partially supplementing them – the effectiveness of communication is monitored using the following indicators.

Brand awareness. Brand awareness is measured via indicators that show the reach of communication.

- Visibility in the media, or the number and quality of media hits related to the Espoo Parishes. Here, quality refers to both the significance and scope of the issues covered and the reach of the medium in which the hit was found. Professional tools are used to continuously monitor visibility. Reporting is done by period and in connection with the annual report. Visibility is monitored not only in news media but also in social media content produced by others.
- The reach of our own social media channels among different age groups. Professional tools are used to continuously monitor reach. Reporting is done by period and in connection with the annual report.

- The reach of our own website. Website user numbers and website user surveys.

Effectiveness. Effectiveness is also measured through separate indicators showing how successful communication has been. In particular, they measure success among strategic target groups.

- Brand awareness survey questions about the success of communication: Does our communication have reach? What communication platforms have been used to engage with parishes?
- Questions in reader/user surveys by parish media regarding media awareness and media use.

5. Reviewing the communication strategy

- The communication strategy will be reviewed when the new council term begins in 2027.